

Women & Asthma

The Facts:

- About 8.2% of Indiana adults report currently having asthma.
- Asthma is more common in adult females than adult males. In Indiana, 10.3% of women (vs. 6% of men) report currently having asthma.
- The trend is reversed among children, and a higher percentage of boys have asthma than girls. The trend changes around puberty.
- Adult women account for more asthma hospitalizations compared to adult men and report more visits to the emergency room and urgent care facilities due to their asthma.

ISDH BRFSS 2005

How to Influence Change:

- Know that adults do suffer from asthma, especially women.
- Share the facts about asthma with all women you know.
- Know that asthma can be controlled and support the use of Asthma Action Plans by physicians, schools, and families.
- Take steps to reduce environmental asthma triggers in places where people with asthma live, play, and work.
- Know that people with exercise-induced asthma can still be active and should speak to their physician about preventing attacks before and during exercise.
- Urge people with asthma to stop smoking to control their asthma and to maintain an overall healthy lifestyle.

Asthma and Smoking:

- Of the 8.2% of Hoosier adults that have asthma, 31.5% report they currently smoke.
- Smoking can worsen existing asthma symptoms and increase the number of attacks experienced.
- Between 2004 and 2005, the percentage of adults with asthma who smoke increased from 25.8 to 31.5, however the overall trend since 2000 has been a decrease.
- Smoking while pregnant has also been shown to increase the risk of developing childhood asthma.

Breathe In, Breathe Out, Summer/Spring 2007; Jaakkola & Gissler, American Journal of Public Health, 2004.

Asthma and Pregnancy:

- Asthma can be controlled during pregnancy, but symptoms may improve, worsen, or remain the same.
- Researchers expect hormone changes may contribute to the change in asthma symptoms and severity during pregnancy.
- Asthma medications should be discussed with a physician early in the pregnancy and monitored throughout as well-controlled asthma creates less risk.
- Typically, asthma medications such as inhalers can be used during pregnancy. Remember, when a mother is having trouble breathing, the fetus is not receiving the oxygen it needs.

Based on information from the National Institutes of Health 2005, www.nih.gov/news/pr/jan2005/nhlbi-11.htm.

Asthma Program
Indiana State Department of Health

2 N. Meridian St., 6B • Indianapolis, IN • 46204
P: 317-233-1325 • F: 317-233-7805
www.in.gov/isdh/programs/asthma/index.htm